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ROBERT BURNS

An Oration

By ALBERT E. JOAB





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ROBERT BURNS

Peasant, Poet, Patriot

AN ORATION, DELIVERED BEFORE THE CALEDONIAN AND ST. ANDREW'S SOCIETIES OF
TACOMA, WASHINGTON, ON THE ONE
HUNDRED AND THIRTY-EIGHTH
ANNIVERSARY OF THE
POET'S NATIVITY

BY

ALBERT E. JOAB

TACOMA, WASHINGTON

Burns

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ROBERT BURNS



ALBERT E. JOAB

To
Mr. Samuel Walker
my friend
whose kind invitation
prompted the effort

—A. E. J.

ROBERT BURNS

*Mr. Chairman, my Scottish friends, and all who
worship at the sacred shrines*

"Of those immortal dead who live again
In minds made better by their presence: live
In pulses stirred to generosity,
In deeds of daring rectitude, in scorn
Of miserable aims that end with self,
In thoughts sublime that pierce the night like stars,
And with their mild persistence urge men's minds
To vaster issues,"

I salute you.

We gather here tonight to wreath, with flowers of thought, of praise, of joy, of truth, of gratitude and love, Tacoma's cenotaph of Scotia's patriot, peasant bard, immortal Burns.

To trace, in detail, all his sad and dreary life, mid pastoral scenes, in Ayrshire dales, and to the very end; to follow him from these, the only Eden of his youth, on that ill-fated trip to wicked Irvine, where first the tempter crossed his path, and, with seductive wiles, and honeyed words, and cunning sophistry, poured poisonous treason in his ear; to grieve with him, as, in his lonely hours, he meditates, an exile in a foreign land, for follies he had done, and pours from out his aching heart that plaintive, touching, last farewell, "The gloomy night is gathering fast"; quickly to turn from these sad thoughts and with him spend the winter months of eighty-six and seven, amid those scenes of rarest brilliancy, in Scotland's capi-

tol, where her nobility, her sages, her social lions and her literati reigned; to go with him upon those border, highland tours, in quest of lovely scenes and quaint, historic lore; to view the cold indifference and neglect of that same aristocratical herd, on his return to Edinburgh; to journey thence, with him disconsolate, to Ellislair, upon the flowery banks of Nith, and tarry with him, in his peasant life again; to go with him upon those melancholy trips as plain exciseman, when glittering pearls of thought were cast, with reckless prodigality, beneath the feet of swine; to join him in mad Bacchanalian revelry, in wild Dumfries, and learn how easy is the way into Avernian depths; and, worst of all, to sit beside him in those last sad hours, and mourn his misery, when he laid down life's weary load, in manhood's early prime, never to take it up again: To do all this is not my task tonight. Leave that to his biographers. You, from the bonny land of sonnie lassies and braw youths, know it by heart.

'Tis rather mine tonight, in the brief time allowed, simply to flash before your mental view a portrait of the poet and the man, as he appears to me, from journeying with him, through those various scenes, a sympathetic and admiring friend; and make brief reference to the splendid fruitage of his rich and wondrous mind.

To me, the life of this great, independent, lofty, noble, gentle, generous, tender, erring, loving soul is one of the darkest, deepest tragedies ever woven of the warp and weft of cruel fate. From earliest youth, till he had measured scarcely half of life's brief span, when suddenly

his frail and shattered bark, still tempest-tossed, put into port, in that “undiscovered country from whose bourn no traveler returns,” his voyage lay through thick and lowering clouds, o'er angry, rough and raging seas, with scarce a gleam of sunshine or of hope, to lead him on his dark and lonely way. Yet, through the environment of this almost impenetrable gloom, the scintillations of his marvelous genius flashed, at times, in rays of mirth, of wit, of wisdom, pathos, and just wrath, reflecting to the world the ever-changing rain-bow tints of his untutored mind, to glad the hearts of peasants and of kings, in every age, in every land and clime.

By nativity and education, a peasant of the lowliest type, he ever dwelt in closest touch with nature's warm and throbbing heart, and was her truest and her best interpreter. He shone not with a borrowed light, but by that fire within—with that resplendent, empyrean flame, with which he was abundantly endowed. He needed not the vain society of pretentious kings, nor all the gaudy trappings of their gay and brilliant courts, to aid him in his glorious work. He was a king of men himself: aye, one of nature's noblest potentates, and had “derived his patent of nobility directly from Almighty God”; for he held sway within the realm of mind, the only sphere in which to reign is truly grand.

From infancy, his playmates, in his almost solitary life, were not the river, woodland, mountain nymphs, and other mythic sprites, mere figments of the fancy, the children of some far-off, antique fairy-land and roseate, sunny clime, that often were play-fellows of our arti-

ficial bards. But he was ever wont to sport, among the green braes of sweet-flowing Afton, with bonney lassies, the airy lave-rocks, the green-crested lapwings, the plaintive stock-doves and the merry mavis, that, with its wild, entrancing, piercing woodland notes, thrilled his great heart, with ecstasies of joy,

“Untwisting all the chains that tie
The hidden soul of harmony.”

The hirpling, little maukin, the gentle sheep, the ourie cattle, the timorous mousie, the whistling curlew, the gray plover and the joyous blackbird were also his dear friends, with which he gamboled, mid harebells, foxgloves, primroses and the mountain daisies, beneath the hoary hawthorne and the wild-brier rose, along the flowry banks and braes of bonny Doon and Ayr, or by the winding Nith; and injury to any one of these, the lowliest children of the universe, would give him poignant grief, so great was his compassion and his love for all of nature’s suffering weans.

These were his friends, these the familiar scenes, and these the modest, simple themes of which he sang, in notes almost divine.

He needed not the fine-spun thought of Greek philosophy to help him analyze the feelings of the human heart and see, with vision clear, the many beauties of the earth; the hand of art, the master hand of Raphael or of Angelo, to help interpret them, with strict fidelity, or bring to mind the glorious visions he had once beheld. To him the heavens declared the glory of God, as to the psalmist, in the elder days, and his immortal mind was one vast picture gallery, to furnish delectation in his solitary

hours. Upon the spacious walls of his retentive memory hung, in all their primal freshness, the many splendors of the universe, that he had seen in former years. The vaulted dome of heavenly blue, with its greater and lesser lights, with its cloud-shifting scenery of filmy, fluffy zephyr-lace and gorgeous tapestries; the bright auroral lights, and lovely rain-bows, with prismatic tints; the flowry, sweetly perfumed banks and braes of winding, purling woodland streams, and all earth's happy bairns that sang and wantoned there; rich, golden harvest-fields, with merry reapers, sheltering from the noon-day sun, beneath some grateful shade; autumnal woods, in brilliant mantles clad, of crimson, vermeil, brown and gold; old winter, in his icy, ermine garments robed, with bitter, biting blasts; the cotters' humble huts, and all their many homely cares, with all those hallowed ties of filial and parental love, that bound them, clustering round each blinkin ingle-low: All these were pictures on those walls, in sooth, had been transfigured there.

At matin-time, the glistening dew-drops on the vernal flowers, that spread their variegated, sweetly perfumed robes o'er bonny braes of Doon, stirred pure emotions in his manly breast, and unto his ethereal soul were brighter far, and far more dear than glittering diadems of kings; aye, far

“Outshone the wealth of Ormus or of Ind,
Or where the gorgeous east, with richest hand,
Showers on her kings barbaric pearl and gold.”

Perplexed by pinching penury, he rejoiced in the wealth of his noble parentage and his

mighty genius. Beset with adversity, he found a soothing balm in the pure society of those loved ones, around the hearth-stane of his homely cot. Consigned to a life of drudgery and toil, he sought sweet solace in his heavenly gift of poesy. Denied the blessings of an education, he drank deep draughts of all true wisdom, from the primal fountain-source, great nature's book, the reservoir of all the verities. Slighted by a stupid aristocracy, that found it necessary to hedge themselves about with high walls and inscribe thereon "exclusive," in order that their insolent presumption might be known to their superiors, he sang, in undying strains, of liberty, independence, equality, fraternity, the dignity of labor and the nobility of true manhood; and taught them that

"The rank is but the guinea's stamp,
The man's the gowd for a' that!"
"Princes and lords are but the breath of kings,
'An honest man's the noblest work of God!'"

Persecuted by ignorant orthodoxy, that has ever hated true genius and advancement, he lashed and lampooned their miserable dogmas, their dwarfing creeds, their canting hypocrisy, their disgusting Phariseeism, and their contemptible superstitions, with withering scorn and sarcasm; and was exultant in the all-embracing love of a God that was not repugnant to his own magnanimous spirit, the God, not of the "old-light church," but of the whole universe—a God as high above their god as the heavens are above the earth, or as his own lofty soul towered above their mean, petty, cringing natures.

Considering his many bitter experiences,

with the truckling, plebeian herd, on the one side, and an ignorant, sneering, insolent aristocracy, on the other, is it any wonder that he sang, in that deeply pathetic dirge,

“Man’s inhumanity to man
Makes countless thousands mourn?”

Is it any wonder that he bought a pocket edition of Milton, in order that he might study the character of Satan, and see if auld Nickieben was not really a nobler nature than the fiends incarnate he found about him, on all sides, in his daily life?

Concerning his morals much has been said, and varying estimates have been put upon them, according as his critics have been reasonable, or unreasonable, just or unjust, intelligent or ignorant, ingenuous or hypocritical. By some he has been classed as one of the world’s great religious teachers. By others he has been regarded censoriously. For mine own part, having studied his life thoroughly and conscientiously, I am frank to confess that, in my opinion, his faults, frailties, errors or sins, if you will, were less and far more venial than those of the sweet singer of Israel, after whom many pious souls have been pleased to name their sons, and to teach them to study his psalms, as moral and literary models. There was certainly no place in the great and loving heart of our poet for that blackest treachery, to say nothing more, that marred the life of the royal psalmist, the second husband of Bathsheba, the mother of Solomon. Judged by his writings or by his life, Burns must be rated much higher, as a moral teacher, than many we find playing in that role. The truth is, his

faults or errors were due to a lack of will power, and not otherwise to the head or heart. Of the very best parentage, richly endowed by nature with the noblest attributes that ever adorned a great soul, with the fine instincts and sensibilities of the tenderest woman, with the vigorous intellect of the most manly man, with the keenest sense of right and wrong, with a conscience as delicate as a sensitive plant, with the passions common to all humanity, but without the regal will to rule the little state of man, he ever struggled, as did St. Paul, to overcome his evil with his nobler nature; "but the good he would, that he did not; but the evil that he would not, that he did."

Let us not forget that humanity is weak and prone to err; that genius with frailty often is allied; that it is not what a man does but what he would that exalts him; and that those who have found the greatest pleasure in throwing stones at this great man are those whose guilty souls are not without sin, by any means.

"Then gently scan your brother man,
Still gentlier sister woman;
Tho' they may gang a kennen wrang,
To step aside is human:
One point must still be greatly dark,
The moving why they do it;
And just as lamely can ye mark
How far perhaps they rue it.

Who made the heart, 'tis He alone
Decidedly can try us:
He knows each chord, its various tone,
Each spring, its various bias:
Then at the balance let's be mute,
We never can adjust it;
What's done we partly may compute,
But know not what's resisted."

Mr. Carlyle, who wrote of Burns so wisely, so tenderly and so well, sneered at his manly spirit of independence, saying that his boasted "rock of independence was but an air-castle after all, that looked well, at a distance, but would screen no one from real wind and wet." What an absurd statement for so great and so good a man to make! We might reply that Socrates and Jesus and Galileo, and all the others, of the world's great heroes and martyrs, found no "shelter from the wind and wet" either. But we must remember that Mr. Carlyle was neither a martyr nor a political reformer; that he also sneered at the French revolution, and the "declaration of the rights of man," substantially the same as our own "declaration of independence"; and we must forgive him, on account of his environment, to which he preferred quietly to adjust himself, rather than to struggle for great and eternal principles, against wind and weather.

Imbued with a spirit of the loftiest patriotism, the poet's most fervent wish was to do his beloved Caledonia some great and lasting good; and he did more to inculcate the true spirit of patriotism and to nationalize his country's literature, than any one before him, or than all his contemporaries together.

Of his triumphal entrance into Edinburgh, in the fall of 1786, what shall we say? What can we say, save that it was most unfortunate, as was that illfated trip to Irvine, a few years before, although for other and different reasons. It is true it was a bright spot, in his otherwise gloomy life, but it was not a healthful light, and its effects upon his independent,

proud and sensitive nature were most pernicious. Stung to the very heart by the cruel insolence, on the part of his Edinburgh Mae-cenases, he turned his footsteps to his newly leased farm at Ellisland, to divide his time between Ceres, the Muses and the grinding, debasing drudgery of an exciseman, to which last he resigned his gifted nature, as he said, only to aid in solving the great problem of food, clothing and shelter, for himself, his wife and his toddling bairns. To say that from this time on, to the time of his sad and untimely demise, a few years later, he was an embittered man, is putting it very mildly. Haunted with the cursed glamour of those former brilliant scenes, galled to a perfect frenzy, by the striking contrast between his humble lot and that luxurious splendor, in which he had seen infinitely baser and meaner souls reveling, without ever having made the one hundredth part of the effort that he had made for worldly success, he forever chafed, under the fardels of his weary life, and wore his noble, manly soul away, in his constant and foolish fretting, after this vain, contemptible, worldly success. He must have felt most keenly

“This is truth the poet sings;
That a sorrow’s crown of sorrows is remembering
happier things.”

O, that he might have followed the dictates of his own better judgment and his own exalted counsels, with which his songs, his poetry and his letters are replete; that he might have reconciled himself to his own sweet, pastoral lot, “far from the madding crowd’s ignoble strife,” cultivating, in sweet contentment, the delightful companionship of Ceres and the Muses, and growing to that sweet, ripe old

age, so beautifully described by Cicero, in his *De Senectute*; that he might have said, with the exiled Duke, in “*As You Like It*”:

“Sweet are the uses of adversity,
Which, like the toad, ugly and venomous,
Wears yet a precious jewel in his head;
And this our life, exempt from public haunt,
Finds tongues in trees, books in the running brooks,
Sermons in stones, and good in everything.”

It was undoubtedly while meditating this sudden and sorrowful change in his fortune that he wrote, in “*Tam O’ Shanter*,” that wonderful medley of humor and pathos, wit and wisdom, as follows, of the evanescence of pleasure:

“But pleasures are like poppies spread:
You seize the flower, its bloom is shed;
Or like the snow falls in the river,
A moment white—then melts forever;
Or like the borealis race,
That flit ere you can point their place;
Or like the rainbow’s lovely form,
Evenishing amid the storm.”

Pondering his sad and checkered career, I am constrained to exclaim, with feelings of pity and of ruth :

Immortal bard, of Scotias rugged clime,
Thou bonny flower, of the rural shade,
Deflour’d and wither’d, ere you reached life’s prime,
And, like the daisy, crushed and lowly laid!

The little mousie’s fate when viewed with thine,
Was slightest shock, to fiercest pangs compar’d:
Well might you o’er dear maukin’s woes repine,
Since kindred sorrows you had daily shar’d.

Corroding passions ruled that lofty soul.
The biting canker pierc’d thy manly heart:
While deep potations, from the fatal bowl,
Benumbed the brain, and flung its gems apart.

Such is the lot of genius gane agley:
Such is the wreck of many an ill-starr’d bark:
Such is the doom of souls, ‘neath error’s sway,—
Lost the whole being, lost in hopeless dark!

The poet's work, like his life, is a mere fragment, yet what a splendid fragment. When we consider the obstacles and difficulties with which he had to contend, the amazing wonder is not that he accomplished so little, but that he accomplished anything at all, in a literary way; that he was ever heard of beyond the narrow limits of his humble, rural home, in Ayrshire and at Ellisland. In spite of poverty, misfortune, drudgery and distress, and the want of that education, leisure, culture, refinement and pleasant environment, so essential for the best and fullest play of the poetic temperament, his splendid genius burst forth at times, in poetry and song, of such consummate sweetness, elegance, beauty, tenderness, pathos and purity, and with such strict fidelity to nature, as the world has rarely seen. He sang, as the nightingale sings, because he was born to sing; for *poeta nascitur non fit*; and this was so, in an eminent degree, of Robert Burns.

“His songs gushed from his heart,
As showers from the clouds of summer,
Or tears from eyelids start,”

remarkable for their sterling worth, their genial humor, their playful pathos, their all-embracing love, their universal sympathy, their clearness and sincerity, their genuine patriotism and their manly, heart-felt sentiment.

“The Cotter's Saturday Night,” breathes the true spirit of ideal family worship and lofty patriotism, while “Scots, wha hae wi' Wallace bled,” is one of the finest and most inspiring war lyrics ever written.

As an example of the way he gilded the low-

liest themes, with the sunlight of his genius,
listen to these exquisite lines,

"TO A MOUNTAIN DAISY."

"Wee, modest, crimson-tipped flow'r,
Thou's met me in an evil hour;
For I maun crush amang the stoure
 Thy slender stem:
To spare thee now is past my pow'r,
 Thou bonie gem.

Alas! its no thy neebor sweet,
The bonie lark, companion meet,
Bending thee 'mang the dewy weet,
 Wi' spreckl'd breast!
When upward-springing, blithe, to greet
 The purpling east.

Cauld blew the bitter-biting north
Upon thy early, humble birth;
Yet cheerfully thou glinted forth
 Amid the storm,
Scarce reared above the parent-earth
 Thy tender form.

The flaunting flowers our gardens yield,
High shelt'ring woods and wa's maun shield;
But thou, beneath the random bield
 O' clod or stane,
Adorns the histie stibble-field,
 Unseen, alone.

There in thy scanty mantle clad,
Thy snawie bosom sun-ward spread,
Thou lifts thy unassuming head,
 In humble guise;
But now the share uptears thy bed,
 And low thou lies!

Such is the fate of artless maid,
Sweet flow'ret of the rural shade!
By love's simplicity betray'd,
 And guileless trust;
Till she, like thee, all soil'd, is laid
 Low i' the dust.

Such is the fate of simple Bard,
On Life's rough ocean luckless starr'd!
Unskilful he to note the card
 Of prudent lore,
Till billows rage, and gales blow hard,
 And whelm him o'er!

Such fate to suffering worth is giv'n,
Who long with wants and woes has striv'n.
By human pride or cunning driv'n
 To mis'ry's brink;
Till, wrench'd of ev'ry stay but Heav'n,
 He, ruin'd, sink!

Ev'n thou who mourn'st the Daisy's fate,
That fate is thine—no distant date;
Stern Ruin's plough-share drives elate,
 Full on thy bloom.
Till crush'd, beneath the furrow's weight,
 Shall be thy doom!"

The same observations will apply to his tender and beautiful verses, and the impressive moral drawn therefrom,

"TO A MOUSE."

"We, sleekit, cowrin, tim'rous beastie,
O, what a panic's in thy breastie!
Thou need na start awa sae hasty,
 Wi' bickering brattle!
I wad be laith to rin an' chase thee,
 Wi' murdering pattle!

I'm truly sorry man's dominion
Has broken Nature's social union,
An' justifies that ill opinion,
 Which makes thee startle,
At me, thy poor, earth-born companion
 An' fellow mortal!

I doubt na, whyles, but thou may thieve;
What then? Poor beastie, thou maun live;
A daimen icker in a thrave
 'S a sama' request;
I'll get a blessin wi' the lave,
 An' never miss't!

Thy wee-bit housie, too, in ruin!
Its silly wa's the win's are strewin'
An' naething, now, to big a new ane,
 O' foggage green!

An' bleak December's win's ensuin,
 Baith snell an' keen!

Thou saw the fields laid bare and waste,
An' weary winter comin fast,
An' cozie here, beneath the blast,
 Thou thought to dwell,
Till crash! the cruel coulter past
 Out thro' thy cell.

That wee-bit heap o' leaves an' stibble,
Has cost thee monie a wearie nibble!
 Now thou's turned out, for a' thy trouble,
 But house or hald,
To thole the winter's sleety dribble,
 An' cranreuch cauld!

"But Mousie, thou art no thy lane,
In proving foresight may be vain:
The best laid schemes o' mice an' men
 Gang aft agley,
An' lea'e us nought but grief an' pain,
 For promis'd joy!"

Still thou art blest, compared wi' me!
The present only toucheth thee:
But och! I backward cast my e'e,
 On prospects drear!
An' forward, tho' I canna see,
 I guess an' fear!"

Again note the following wholesome moral, drawn by the poet, in his characteristic treatment of that lowliest of lowly themes, which none but a true genius would have dared essay:

"O wad some Power the giftie gie us
To see ousels as ithers see us!
It wad frae monie a blunder free us,
 An' foolish notion:
What airs in dress an' gait wad lea'e us,
 An' ev'n devotion!"

Of all his many charming songs there is probably none more deeply pathetic and tenderly touching than these matchless stanzas, on

“THE BANKS O’ DOON.”

“Ye banks and braes o’ bonnie Doon,
How can ye bloom sae fresh and fair?
How can ye chant, ye little birds,
And I sae weary fu’ o’ care!
Thou’ll break my heart, thou warbling bird.
That wantons thro’ the flowering thorn!
Thou minds me o’ departed joys,
Departed never to return.

Aft hae I rov’d by bonie Doon,
To see the rose and woodbine twine,
And ilka bird sang o’ its luve,
And fondly sae did I o’ mine.
Wi’ lightsome heart I pu’d a rose,
Fu’ sweet upon its thorny tree!
And my fause luver staw my rose—
But ah! he left the thorn wi’ me.”

In conclusion, what important lessons do we learn, and what great moral are we to draw from the study of this most pathetic tragedy?

That Almighty God, out of His abundant goodness and generosity, again gave to an ignorant world His most precious gift to man; that he was a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; that he was despised and rejected of men; that he was treated by the cruel, ignorant world, as children would treat a most precious and costly jewel, of which they know not the value; that he suffered the same ignominy and disgrace that other great and lofty souls have suffered; and last and most important of all, that when God gives us a great religious teacher, as he has done, one who feasts his immortal mind only upon the eternal veri-

ties, and gives them to us for our daily food, we should appreciate and reverence him, in his own day and generation, for his wisdom and his goodness, and not wait to cumber his tomb with posthumous panegyries and with those flowers of love and affection that would be so grateful, during life.

My Caledonian friends, well may you worship at the sacred shrine of your beloved bard. The whole world joins in your devotions. Intelligent communion with such lofty souls is heavenly bliss.

“Such graves as his are pilgrim shrines,
Shrines to no code or creed confined,—
The Delphian vales, the Palestines,
The Meccas of the mind.”

Born one hundred and thirty-eight years ago today, he will never die; for

“As long as the heart has passions,
As long as life has woes”;

as long as “a thing of beauty is a joy forever”; as long as exquisite tenderness, sweetness, purity, simplicity and love excite pleasant sensations in the human mind; as long as the earth’s great souls and true genius are revered by delighted humanity, so long will his lovely poems and his sweet and tender songs thrill, with feelings of mingled pathos and of joy, with the most pleasant emotions, the heart-strings of mankind; so long will the name and the fame of Robert Burns, old Scotia’s uncrowned peasant prince, be held in grateful memory, by an admiring world.

ADDENDA

Of the many kindly letters at hand, from those receiving copies of the first edition of the oration, the following scholarly and illuminating criticism, together with the answers thereto, is here-with added, by permission:

The University of Minnesota
Minneapolis

PRESIDENT'S OFFICE

December 23rd, 1909.

ALBERT E. JOAB, ESQ.,

Tacoma, Washington.

MY DEAR MR. JOAB:

I am very much obliged to you for your kind letter, of December the 18th, and for the copy of your oration on Robert Burns, with your Christmas Greetings, received yesterday.

I have read the oration, with much pleasure. Parts of it I have read several times. All of it is exceedingly good and appropriate to the occasion. Pages twelve and thirteen are remarkable. His "friends" and the "pictures on the walls" are presented with wonderful skill and felicity, and show very intimate acquaintance with both Burns and Scotland. They are poetical and almost poetry. Indeed one can pass from the "glittering diadems of kings; aye, far" to "Outshine the wealth of Ormus or of Ind," without a consciousness of change of style. The poetic accent remains throughout.

Your peroration is admirable, and your quotations exactly the right ones for the occasion.

There is something in Burns' poetry that tends to make his readers poetical in feeling, and, I think, in some degree, in expression, so that a man involuntarily, in speaking of Burns, approaches a poetic style, much more nearly than he would if he were speaking of Charles Darwin or Isaac Newton.

You have dealt with your subject with a poet's appreciation of a poet. I congratulate you most heartily. I have heard a good many addresses on Robert Burns, but I have never heard one that equals yours, in its choice of words and its vivid reproduction of the poet's environment and his inner life.

Very truly yours,

CYRUS NORTHRUP.

Tacoma, Washington, Dec. 28th, 1909.

CYRUS NORTHRUP, L. L. D.,
President—University of Minnesota,
Minneapolis, Minn.

MY DEAR DOCTOR NORTHRUP:

Your very kind and most welcome letter, of the 23rd instant, complimenting, so graciously, my oration on Robert Burns, is just received. As I read it, tears involuntarily well from my eyes;—not of sorrow and distress, but of gratitude, of love and of joy.

To know that my work has such hearty approval of the dear instructor of my youth, whom I always esteemed so highly, and reverenced as a Past Master in the art of oratory, is, in truth, a supreme pleasure.

While I have received a number of beautiful gifts, this glorious Yule-tide, I have received none so precious as this; and I shall always treasure it, as one of my dearest possessions.

I trust that you will feel partially repaid, for your labors, of many years ago, “‘Neath the elms of dear, old Yale”, by the receipt of the little brochure, the first-fruits of my mind, which you assisted in cultivating, so wisely and so well. And so may you feel that your sowing was not entirely in vain; but that you cast your bread upon the waters, and this little crumb of comfort, among others, has returned, after these many years.

I am deeply delighted to know that you have had such a long and such an enviable career, in the educational world; and I sincerely hope that you will be blessed with many more years, of health and happiness, in which to enjoy the rich fruition of your life's illustrious labors.

In conclusion, let me assure you, in the words of the great Italian poet, as rendered by our own premier poet Laureate, of my dearest, heart-felt sentiment:

“‘Oh, never from the memory of my heart
Your dear, paternal image shall depart,
Who, while on earth, ere yet by death surprised,
Taught me how mortals are immortalized;
How grateful am I, for that patient care,
All my life long, my language shall declare,
Honor and reverence and the good repute
That follows faithful service as its fruit,
Be unto thee, whom living I salute”.

Most cordially and Gratefully,

ALBERT E. JOAB.

State of Washington
Supreme Court

Olympia, Washington, Jan. 4th, 1910.

COL. ALBERT E. JOAB,
Tacoma, Washington.

DEAR SIR:

I thank you sincerely, for your courtesy, in sending me a copy of your oration on Robert Burns.

Its perusal gave me an hour of unalloyed intellectual pleasure. It is certainly a literary gem, worthy of the pen of any of our very best writers. It ought to be read by every one, who can appreciate elevated thought, combined with elegance of diction.

Again, I thank you sincerely,

R. O. DUNBAR.

Tacoma, Washington, Jan. 6th, 1910.

HON. R. O. DUNBAR,
Olympia, Washington.

MY DEAR AND VENERABLE JUDGE DUNBAR:

Please accept my profound gratitude, for the generous words of praise you have given my little Christmas Greeting. It is wonderful how much can be said in a few simple words; and your good, honest, noble soul shines out, in every line. I appreciate it especially coming, as it does, from the dean of our Supreme Court, who has graced that exalted position, with honor, and dignity, and ability, for so many years.

Most sincerely yours,

ALBERT E. JOAB.

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